

**Chris O'Connor**

**Security Guard at Bradley International Airport**

My name is Chris O'Connor, and I've been working security at Bradley Airport outside Hartford for five years. The union contract we got three years ago this April has made a huge difference in the lives of many of my coworkers. That contract depended on our coverage by the Standard Wage Law. That's why I'm here to ask you to support HB 5378. It would make sure that places like the airport are permanently covered by the Standard Wage Law, so we won't lose the advances we've made.

Before 2013, I saw people with health conditions who couldn't afford to go to a doctor, and now they're getting treated for high blood pressure, and sometimes for things they never knew they had. The families are also benefitting from more pay, and now we all have a pension plan. You want to talk about night and day, you're talking about it.

The work we do at the airport is important in many ways. Bradley is the second largest airport in New England, with almost 3 million passengers served a year.<sup>1</sup> Security guards like me are always out on the curb to keep traffic moving. We're also at checkpoints at all the entrances to the field, making sure that people are qualified to go out there. When you're out on the curb, if there's a medical emergency, we're the first one there. Recently I helped a guy who was diabetic and just went down on the pavement. I knew the questions to ask the woman who was with him – what medications was he on, how long ago did he take them — and I got that information to the paramedics I called. We had a guy a couple months ago who was driving drunk, and we relayed the information to the police to stop him. Every day, we are the first ones on the scene for many issues like these.

I'm a widower. My two kids are grown. But I work with a lot of young people who are just starting out. Last October, a study from the Alliance for a Just Society said a single person in the state of Connecticut needs to make \$ 19 an hour to get by<sup>2</sup>. And we make \$13.99. We're not where we need to be, which is why I also want to say I support HB 5370, which would raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. But to get there, we need to also make sure we don't slip backwards. By covering "quasi-public agencies," HB 5378 would make sure airport security is always treated like other property service workers in the state under the Standard Wage Law. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning\\_capacity/passenger\\_allcargo\\_stats/passenger/media/cy14-commercial-service-enplanements.pdf](http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/passenger_allcargo_stats/passenger/media/cy14-commercial-service-enplanements.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.journalinquirer.com/connecticut\\_and\\_region/report-says-connecticut-s-living-wage-is-an-hour/article\\_78e3f7b4-78d3-11e5-b69b-db252e866b54.html](http://www.journalinquirer.com/connecticut_and_region/report-says-connecticut-s-living-wage-is-an-hour/article_78e3f7b4-78d3-11e5-b69b-db252e866b54.html)